

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Use of Treated Wastewater Possible in Wildomar

By ROCKY SALMON

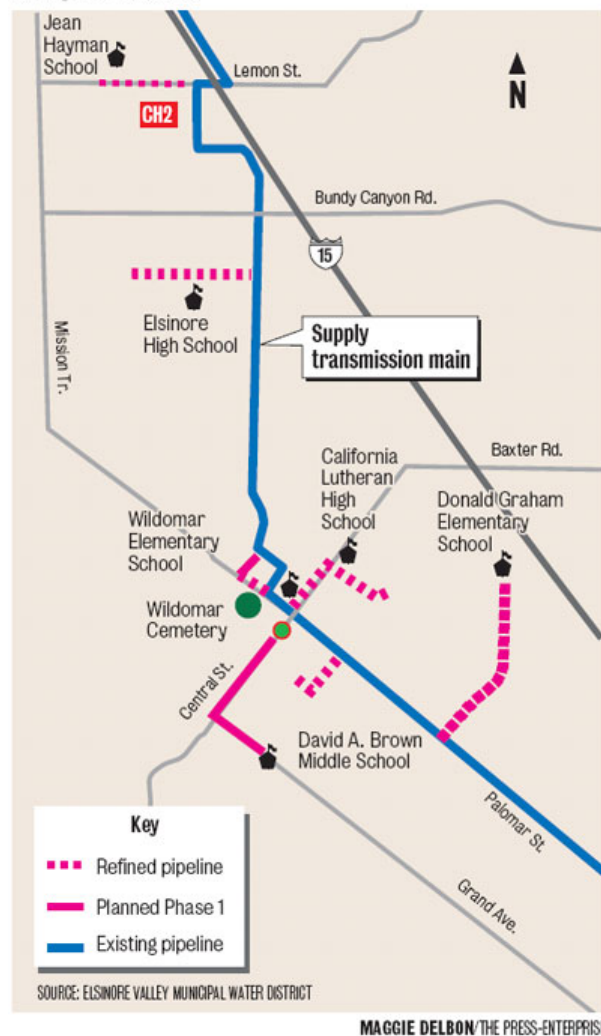
10:00 PM PDT on Saturday, May 17, 2008

WILDOMAR - Wildomar is set to join neighboring cities in a push to make sure every drop of available water doesn't go to waste.

Several parks, schools and even churches are slated to receive treated wastewater under a proposed plan by the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District. The project is expected to cost \$16 million, and the district hopes to have 25 percent matching funds from the state and federal governments.

Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, sponsored federal bill H.R. 31 to provide the 25 percent matching funds. The bill was approved by the House of Representatives in 2007 and now is waiting for a Senate vote.

RECLAIMED WATER EXTENSION: Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District wants to build recycled-water pipelines throughout Wildomar.



The bill recently was discussed in several Senate committees.

"As long as people have water flowing into their homes, most don't care about a shortage or where it might come from," board member John Lloyd said. "This is going to allow us to keep up with the demand for water and lower costs for watering these larger areas."

The new pipes would tie into a reclamation plant near Palomar Street built by Eastern Municipal Water District. The water lines would feed larger users where recycled water is safe to use such as landscaped areas and sports fields.

Targets include David A. Brown Middle School, Elsinore High School, Wildomar Cemetery and The Diamond in Lake Elsinore.

"We need to do this to remain at status quo," Lloyd said.

"In reality, we haven't had any major infrastructure improvements in the past 40 years. We can't continue to increase in population and not provide more water."

District officials expect the reclaimed water to save the district about \$2.6 million in imported water fees.

The entire first phase of construction is expected to last up to five years and would be followed by more pipes.

The Wildomar City Council sent a letter of support last month despite some concerns about the timing of the project. Councilman Bob Cashman said the City Council just wants to be in the loop when it comes to planning and the construction process.

"Water will be a scarce commodity in the future," he said.

"We will be taking over the ballparks and sports fields so it's important for us to find something more economical."

Many area cities use treated wastewater on landscaping and ball fields.

Murrieta looks into recycled water at every project and has several parks that use treated wastewater.

"It's not finalized but when an agency has a chance to get money to build something like this, we want to make it happen," Cashman said.

Those who were using the community parks didn't seem to mind the idea of playing on grass watered with treated wastewater.

Anna Nunez was watching her kids play catch on the grass at Windsong, a park in Wildomar.

"As long as my kids aren't drinking the water, who cares?" the Wildomar woman said. "I have been to these other parks in Murrieta where they have that type of water. They got signs everywhere. It's not like the old days when it smelled bad."